

## LITERARY NEWS, VIEWS AND CRITICISM

## NEW BOOKS.

## The Young Man and the Street.

The description of the beautiful Mrs. Dover in Mr. Vincent O'Sullivan's story of "The Good Girl" (E. P. Dutton and Company) is rather remarkable. Vendred studied her as she sat near him in the music hall. He had good power of observation and was keen at comparisons and conclusions. Of course he observed her eyes, her nose, her hair, her dress, her jewelry, her ears and tied in a great knot at the neck, was the "irresistibly right" accompaniment to the full face with the wide eyes and rather turned up nose. The impression of fitness was irresistible and he did not resist it, his business in the matter was easy. But the arrangement of the hair was right. "It was her style, her own peculiar style, as if by instinct, in any age or clime, she must have carried her hair out in that way." It was a Greek and a conventional way. We have seen it in marble statues and in plaster casts. She sat with her hands in her lap, listening to the band. She was perfectly at rest, placid, she did not look around at all, and she Vendred could observe her without fear of being caught. He gave place to those powers that he had mentioned, looking to make her out, to desire her, exactly as the world she fitted in. This was possible. She was certainly beautiful, but she had that cloudy, thick, indelible look which is often seen on the faces of musicians of all lands, and from the foot and throat she might be a singer. Still Vendred did not think that she was a prima donna. Something in her look and bearing forbade that inference. She had none of that unmistakable look of haggard insecurity which is the mark of the artists in all arts who know that they exist only to give pleasure and which serves as a kind of fraternal recognition to themselves. We recall Karl Lili Lehmann. She had no look of haggard insecurity. We never saw a more secure look.

Vendred thought he detected an "immense goodness" in Mrs. Dover, but he was mistaken upon that point. He should never have pursued her, never have sought her distinctly uneasy consent. It is an interesting part of the story that describes the young man's distressing trip. His mother was a Roman Catholic of the Jesuit sect. His home tutor was a Jesuit. When the boy was sent to school in Belgium he had the worst time of all; he came back with very sore tones. Doubtless he was influenced by his tutor's views of the Jesuits, with a crushing exception of religious paintings, this tutor considered as useless as a waste of time. It was full of low wantonness and indecent to filthy lust and without it, became a disgrace and a shame. Poetry was mousous except in the learned languages. "As for the romances of phantasies, your Peters, your Chateaubriand, your Baskins, stylists as they were called, when he looked into their volumes he shuddered to the soul."

Why not? "To wish to say something slightly, slightly, was an interesting part of the devil." As for all those imbeciles of victimization, makers of epigrams, play authors, stage critics, exercising themselves for applause in stratagems of language, whose sentences were franked up like a perfumed woman and whose ignoble and was to amuse, surely their place was among the lowest. If two ways of saying a thing suggested themselves to a writer he should choose the one he liked best. But there was one dislike which the tutor was quite unable to implant in Vendred. That was the dislike of women. He was not the man to escape from the seductive diabolisms of the wonderful Mrs. Dover.

Capt. Dover, husband of Mrs. Dover, had perhaps been in the army, but at the time of the story we find him a bold and distinctly unscrupulous gentleman living upon his wife. It is a misarrangement of justice that the reader should be entertaining, but the reader will find the home of the Dovers to dull place. There was a party there which was well worth attending, and in their more private moments the Dover family afforded plenty of interest. For a long time Vendred's love for Mrs. Dover was elevated, noble, ethereal. "He had not the least desire to put his arm round her neck, to clutch her under the chin," she was very lovely, "to be sure, she allowed him to pay the expenses of the household. She made no more of that than the Captain did, and the Captain made nothing at all of it. He was far from being as scrupulous as he was expensive. It is true, moreover, that several gentlemen paid obnoxious court to Mrs. Dover. They made no bones of this business. If the Captain had been a jealous man he would have remonstrated with them, but so far from that he seemed to encourage it, he even appeared to engineer it. Vendred saw these things. He could not help seeing them. He had moments of bitterness, what lover has not even when the cause is less discernible? But he continued to adore."

He had no idea that he was to be forced to marry Louise, the Captain's callow and queer daughter. In the restaurant Louise would read the bill of fare and wonder how she could get an appetite wonderfully difficult to tempt, while all the time she was ready to eat her napkin. "That will show how young she was." It was after he had married Louise that Mrs. Dover's great wickedness came out. A strange story, dreadful, but readable.

## Mrs. Alice Hegan Rice's New Story.

An enticing title has been chosen for her latest story by Mrs. Alice Hegan Rice, a title reminiscent of Mrs. Wiggs and the tales the reader associates with her, "The Romance of Billy Goat Hill" (The Century Company), but in it she wanders far away from her own patch to browse in pastures that countless other authors have plucked before her. Her heroine is a young Kentucky girl, a lovely creature that has grown up without restraint and no knowledge of the world and its conventions, whose sufferings in consequence have the reader's feelings to the bitter end. Now and then Mrs. Rice reaches out into the wider world with a sure grasp that rouses the reader's hopes, but she lets go quickly in order to torture the unfortunate heroine.

That young person is in love with a desirable young man, who determines to abandon his previous dissipation for her sake. He is unlucky first to keep a companion straight, is raised up in a shooting affray in a saloon and chooses that time to leave the country. A witness of the affair is a small ragamuffin who cannot talk, a gentleman of whom Mrs. Rice might have made much but whom she makes merely as a *deus ex machina*.

There is a view of an old Kentucky home that has to be sold to strangers; there is a glimpse of a genial Kentucky Colonel, who is slaughtered in a railroad accident in order to heap up misery on the heroine; there is more of a distinguished scholar whom everybody esteems and who is attractive enough to induce the heroine to marry him while he is recovering from the effects of the same accident, but who sinks back into his books and wholly neglects her so far as the reader can see. He is later removed, with as little concern as he is brought in, after he has served the author's purpose.

The hero after a while returns, and his case goes to trial. We cannot make out whether he is tried for felonious assault or whether he brings suit for libel against those who accuse him. At the eleventh hour the small boy, who has obtained the faculty of speech in the meanwhile, gives his testimony, the hero wins the case and the heroine at last falls upon his neck and is happy.

The heroine is attractive, the hero might be if he had a fair chance. The backbone of the story is an efficient but ill-tempered cook, who turns out in the end to be the small boy's mother. That young man is a gem and ought to have been used much more, as well as his red-headed comrade. The people of the slums are natural but not overinteresting; the society people, on whom Mrs. Rice turns her satire, are more commonplace. What popularity the book may achieve we do not venture to predict, it is very possible that it will, as his mother may say, "for Mrs. Rice has her public. Here she shows what she can do well and what she can do much less well. As a matter of art we believe that her venture into this form of romance is a mistake."

Entertaining Light Reading. Those who have read any of Mr. G. A. Birmingham's delightful Irish farces will welcome a new one from his pen, those who have not have deprived themselves of a great pleasure and can make his acquaintance through his latest outburst of humor and fun, "Tricollis Spies" (Hodder and Stoughton, George H. Doran Company). The heroine is a charming little hoven whose imagination and lively spirits lead an English public school-boy through a merry dance to the end of the tale. The setting is the Irish west coast and the natives, with the oddities that the author likes to depict, play their due part in the story, though they are kept in the background by the hero's exploits. Mr. Birmingham continues his revelations of the difference between the Celtic and the Saxon temperaments and manner of thought, and he lets his wit play casually on a good many other subjects. Artistically it is the best constructed story of his that we have read, for he chokes off the digressions of which he is fond before they make the reader impatient.

The hero of Dorothy Conyers' "The Arrival of Antony" (E. P. Dutton and Company) is an amusing and ingenious invention, an Irishman brought up in Germany, unfamiliar with colloquial English and wholly ignorant of sporting terms. He lands in an Irish fox hunting country, and his struggle with his German ideas till the Irishman in him gets the upper hand is very entertaining. He is a likeable young fellow and the people he has to do with are pleasing. For the most part, including the young woman he falls in love with. The mystery connected with him is obvious from the start, and the author probably intends to be funny when she employs the time-honored strawberry mark to reveal his identity. For the greater part of the volume the proper tone of light comedy is maintained, but the author's interest seems to lag. There is too much horse dealing, fox hunting and racing, she repeats herself and wanders so much that that is bright and original in it, however, that the reader will feel repaid, for he knows from the start how it must end.

In "Trying On Torchy" (Edward J. Clode and Company) the reader will find Mr. Sewell Ford's pretty unaltered. Through the successful episodes that make up the book he preserves his marvelous vocabulary of up-to-date slang, his keen ear for the sound of words, his ready acceptance of polite society is a convention of this type of fiction which Torchy shares with his predecessors and contemporaries since "Chummy Fadden" set the example. The many who like Torchy do not object to it. He is usually an amusing hero as he is at the beginning, and we most congratulate Mr. Ford on having kept him alive so long.

Another pretty love idyl by Mr. Ralph Henry Barbour, with the usual amount of content of titled pictures, on the margins, will be found in "Cupid on Route" (Clifford G. Badger, Boston). The love idyl is not so attractive as Mr. Barbour usually makes it, because the author seems more interested in railroad time tables and the difficulties that may arise in a trip from New York to Quebec via Boston than in the young people concerned. It is a story of pursuit and therefore holds the interest, so that the reader will pardon the needless digressions, such as the uniformity of the West, once with New York manners and the discussion on preparatory schools. Mr. Barbour has handled his yearly theme much more skillfully in the past.

In a charming book that makes very pleasant reading, "A Bachelor's Comedy" (Hodder and Stoughton, George H. Doran Company), J. E. Buckrose relates the incidents in an English country village that turn a boyish curate into a man. They are slight occurrences and often comical, but they serve to make the villagers appreciate the good qualities of the curate, the nonsense out of him and to make him human. The new vicar is a lovely young fellow who has the reader's sympathy as he makes his blunders and gets rid of his wrong ideas, still more when he falls in love and fights with himself. The people he has to deal with are natural and attractive, though the well to do seem more indifferent to class distinctions than they usually are in English fiction. Humor predominates, but the serious parts are effective and the sentimental parts are not excessive. It is an enjoyable, clean and healthy story told in excellent English that will bear rereading.

Good Short Stories and Others. A new field among the strange elements that are now forming the American people has been investigated by Lucille Baldwin Van Sleet in "Eve's Other Children" (Frederick A. Stokes Company), the Syrian colony in New York. The reader will be attracted to the plucky little heroine of many of these tales, with the jumble of Syrian memories and cus-

## New Rinehart Novel



A Comedy Novel by the

Author of *Seven Days*

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By Mary Roberts Rinehart

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Pictures by Wilson and Phillips. At All Bookellers. \$1.40 net. The Bobbs-Merrill Co.

toms contrasting with new American ideas in her young brain, and to her cosmopolitan playmates. Some of the stories treat of the problems of older people. That of the strike breaker is worth considering by settlement workers. The stories are well told and the subject is new.

The three short stories included in "The Preliminaries" (Houghton Mifflin Company) by Cornelia A. P. Comer all deal with marriage and are well written and clever. The first sets very ingeniously before a young man the objections, from several points of view, to a marriage on which he has set his heart, and leads him to consider the true essentials in life; the second deals with divorce, and the third with the woman who abandons her home to pursue what she regards as a higher object. The author impresses her lessons without preaching and keeps her readers interested.

A baker's dozen of stories, all turning on one point and all interesting, will be found in "Lifted Masks" by Susan Glaspell (Frederick A. Stokes Company). The point in each is the decisive moment in a life, with the revelation of the real motives or feelings of the actor in forming the decision, and as the lives are varied the use of interest is secured without loss of interest. Several have to do with politicians, others with people in difficulties. The author's point of view is over-sentimental at times, but she pleads her cases well and holds her reader's attention.

Admirers of the late Myrtle Reed will be glad to get the posthumous volume of short stories which G. P. Putnam's Sons publish under the title "The White Shield." They are pretty, sentimental and rather slight. They have the same quality as her other books, but it is clear that she needed more room in which to expand her ideas than these very short tales or impressions afford. It may be early work, but it is remarkably even in quality, if it is, and the style is that of the later books.

Why the heroine of "Miss Wealthy, Deputy Sheriff" by Elizabeth Henry White did not on Shakespeare is too valuable to lose through the lapse of time. His views have been taken into consideration even by his opponents and his edition of Shakespeare is one that all special students must consult. Our knowledge of Shakespeare and of English has advanced greatly, however, in the last half century and to be useful to the general public to bring White's contribution to the knowledge of those who have not a library at hand, a thorough revision of the edition was necessary.

The revision has been made by competent scholars, who had at their command the results of the latest investigations and at the same time felt the proper pity for Richard Grant White's memory—Prof. William P. Trent, L.L.D., of Columbia University, Dr. Benjamin W. Wells, and the late Prof. John B. Henneman of the University of the South. They have preserved White's text and what part of his notes and comments are still available and have added the improvements that forty-five years have brought with them.

"The New Grant White Shakespeare" is issued by Little, Brown and Company in most attractive typographical dress—twelve small, handy volumes in limp leather binding printed in large and beautiful clear type with illustrations from famous pictures and reproductions of great actors. It takes up a relatively small space and can hold its own with any library edition of Shakespeare that is before the public.

Books for the Young. A very handsome child's book, a small thick quarto, to the almost for British hand to hold, with a been put together by Mr. W. Heath Robinson in "Bill the Minster" (Henry Holt and Company), both story and pictures. The story is mildly humorous after the British pattern; the children we meet at the start finding the exiled King of Troy, following him to restore him to his throne and running across one queer creature after another, who tells a story and joins the procession. The pictures, however, are capital. They are artistically illustrated and funny in the way children like, and the black and white pictures are even funnier than the colored ones. The fortunate children who get the book will enjoy it.

Mr. John Buchan has a high regard for Sir Walter Raleigh and undertakes to tell the story of his life to children (Henry Holt and Company). He does this in a series of episodes, which purport to be told by an eye witness. This makes them very interesting, and Mr. Buchan writes an English which is better than is usually found in books for growing people and much rarer in books written for children. Back in the Victorian '50s Prof. John Henry Pepper was a distinguished lecturer on popular science in London and "Prof. Pepper's Ghost" was famous. He wrote a book "The Boy's Playbook of Science," which was deservedly popular, and which joined to scientific statements of what was known at that time popular experiments, which brought the facts home to every boy. Since then science has advanced enormously and even greater changes have been worked through its practical applications. Dr. John Martin's revision of Pepper's book is, therefore, practically a new book, for the only application of electricity in those days was in the telegraph. Airships, automobiles, marine turbines, the X-rays, wireless telegraphy and a hundred other everyday things were unknown and even the theory of great changes have been made. The new book, which is still published by George Routledge and Sons (E. P. Dutton and Company), is wholly up to date, while preserving the popular character of the original. Now that "Little Women" has been

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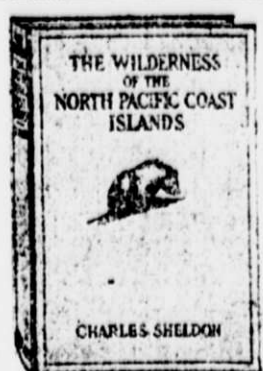
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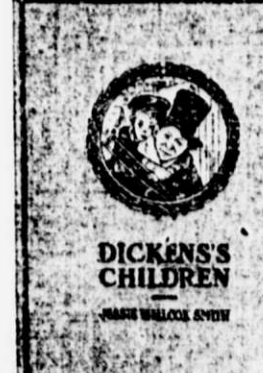
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